

CHARIVARIA.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE'S object in visiting Berlin, it is officially declared, is to obtain information about Old Age Pensions. Now that his recommendation to grant the pensions has been adopted, he naturally feels that he ought seriously to study the subject.

When Mr. CHURCHILL is married, Mr. HALDANE will be the only bachelor left in the Cabinet; and we are glad to hear that, in order to give the War Minister a chance, he has been supplied with a smart semi-military uniform.

At the Folkestone Beauty Show medals were awarded to those competitors who did not win prizes—as testimony, we suppose, to their pluck in entering.

"Billy," who is now appearing at the Palace Theatre, is, it is announced, the only monkey motorist in the world. This just shows how deceptive appearances may be.

A Frankfort slaughter-house employee, named ZINERT, is reported to have killed 5,000,000 hogs during the past twenty-seven years. Here, surely, we have the man to deal with our scorching motorists.

A member of the staff of the South-Eastern Railway Company, who was presented with an address upon retiring after sixty-one years' service, mentioned that in his early days third-class carriages were open, and only two foot-warmers were kept at the Bricklayers' Arms Station. This is the most complete answer we have yet had to the charge of No Progress so frequently brought against the S.E.R.

The *Daily Mail* must really be more careful. Our contemporary caused grave offence in certain exclusive military circles last week by stating that the Suffragettes' audience at Boulter's Lock included "many influential people and officers of the Brigade of Guards."

Familiarity breeds contempt. The Dutch have no intention of submitting their quarrel with Venezuela to a Conference at their own Hague.

The Registrar-General's report for the last quarter chronicles a remarkable decline in the death rate. It looks as if Old Age Pensions were



Mistress (to new gardener). "I THOUGHT YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE A STAUNCH TEETOTALER!"
Gardener. "NOT STAUNCH, MUM—NOT STAUNCH!"

proving an irresistible attraction to many persons.

"Might I ask the rev. Archdeacon who believes in the future life of animals," writes Mr. J. P. HOWARD in *The Express*, "if he includes among them serpents, centipedes, wasps, scorpions, and all kinds of vermin?" If yes, we take it that Mr. J. P. HOWARD will reconsider his desire to go to a Better World.

The railway companies are at last becoming seriously alarmed at the way in which they are losing passengers, and a safer catch for the doors of corridor carriages is promised.

The reissue of an old book by Mr. HUBERT WALES as a new one has had one result which cannot be very gratifying to the author at any rate. The book has been regarded as showing a

distinct advance on Mr. WALES' subsequent works.

Mr. OWEN MORAN, the English light-weight boxer, has, *The Daily Mail* informs us, been held up and robbed of forty pounds in the streets of San Francisco. It was evidently not realised who he was.

Mystery of a Priceless Collection of Gems.

"LOST.—Three Copies of 'Punch' namely March 11th, 18th and 25th have been lost or mislaid. If returned in good condition, the finder will be rewarded and no questions asked. CHURCH PERIODICAL CLUB.—*Tokyo Times*.

The curse of drink is once more illustrated by a letter from a "Surrey Householder" in *The Times*:—

"I have many times been driven home when attempting to walk upon the high roads. This should not be." Indeed it should not.

THE UNGATHERED BIRD.

ALL day you tramped, on bloody business bent,
Knee-deep in heather, middle-deep in fern;
All day your weary perspiration went
To feed the local burn.

Far up the flanking hills from time to time
The keeper drew your notice to a "point,"
And thither you would dolorously climb,
Creaking in every joint;

And, having ultimately scaled the sky,
Stand puffing till the pointer (humorous dog)
Confessed that he had been deluded by
A latent lark, or frog;

Said "My mistake, Sir"; eased his rigid tail;
And, ranging wide without a sign of stitch,
Put up a covey well across the vale
On to the next-door pitch.

And if, for once, he gave a true alarm,
And made a guide-post of his quivering nose,
Your spray of pellets did no deadlier harm
Than water from a hose.

During the luncheon-interval they told
The heavy tale of corpses, two by two;
But there was not a single ghost that rolled
Accusing eyes at you.

The thought encouraged so profound a pique
That not the cherry-whisky's luscious fume,
Nor many midges browsing on your cheek
Could chase your settled gloom.

It lingered through that lamentable day.
Round you the air still rang with chortling cries
Uttered by scathless birds that chose this way
To vent their glad surprise.

And here and there some old and seasoned cock
Turned in his flight to throw a backward glance,
Anxious to see what you were like—the crock
That missed so soft a chance.

At length, as evening's shade began to fall,
The whole of Inverness-shire might have heard,
Clear as a thunderclap, your shattering call:—
"MARK DOWN THAT WOUNDED BIRD!"

No one but you so much as saw him flinch.
We searched in vain; while you protested still
That surely somewhere, dying inch by inch,
He cursed your fatal skill.

It's my belief the bird's alive and fit;
Yet, if you like to think he really dropped,
Why then, to save your feelings, I'll admit
The theory you adopt—

That, dead within some moist and hollow "hag,"
Beyond the power of dogs or men to trace,
Lies, unembodied in the general bag,
Your lonely half-a-brace. O. S.

"The Cologne Accident Insurance Company has decided to grant insurance policies to those who take part in aerial journeys in balloons. The insurance commences on the persons entering the balloon-basket or car, and will cease as soon as the insured have left the basket or car."—*The Financier*.

Unfortunately that is often just the moment when the insurance is really needed.

"RABBITS."

WHAT thoughts that simple word conjures up! Rabbits! To this one it suggests the old home-field where the bunnies used to play, where the little brooklet in the left-hand bottom corner used to be, now trickling down to join the main stream, now stopping to ask the way of a kindly yokel. To that one it suggests the gun; the rustle as the furry fellow trots from his hole; the bang of two barrels; and another rustle as the furry fellow trots into another hole. To a third it suggests a steaming dish with too much pepper and not enough salt. This one and that one and the other one are all wrong, for "Rabbits" is a game.

Mr. "Z.," a gentleman who has his own private page in one of our great illustrated monthlies, told me all about it. "If," he said, "you are at a party and find that the company needs enlivening, the following little catch is bound to prove amusing. You wait till the conversation turns upon rabbits" (as, I take it, it is bound to do sooner or later), "and seizing your opportunity you ask casually if anyone would care for a game of 'Rabbits.'" He then tells you how to proceed. I cut this part out, sold the rest of the magazine to my cousin (he not knowing that it was the rest), and waited my opportunity.

Not only am I an amateur humourist, but I am also such an expert cyclist as to justify my being asked to a bicycle picnic. It was at one of these great social events that my opportunity arrived. It had been drizzling all the afternoon, there had been five punctures and a collision, and the best part of the tea had lost its way. I thought well to cheer and amuse the party according to Mr. "Z.'s" prescription.

At the outset there was a curious lack of enthusiasm. The ladies were only prevailed upon to play by the natural politeness and curiosity of the sex; the children joined in the fun under duress; and of all the men, one only was willing, and he merely because he had thought I said "Bridge." A man, even if a major, who thinks you said "Bridge" when you really said "Rabbits," ought to have his bicycle taken away from him.

I am not the one to let little things stand in my way, and soon had the company upon its knees in a circle, round which (for reasons not at once apparent to the lay mind) the question is passed: "Do you know how to play 'Rabbits'?" I explained that all one had to do was to answer the question and ask one's neighbour. I begged them, in the words of BURKE, "to admire where they could not presently understand," and explained again. I should have explained a third time had it not been for the Major. I then started the ball rolling and put the question to my neighbour. "No," she said. "Then ask your neighbour," I said. "Why?" she asked. "You'll know in a moment," I told her, and she asked him. "No," he said. "Then ask your neighbour," I said. "Why?" he asked. "You'll know in a moment," I told him, and he asked her. "No," she said. "Then ask your neighbour," I said. "Why?" she asked. "You'll know in a moment," I told her, and she asked him.

Eventually I got as far as the Major, the last but one of the circle. He said, "I have had enough of this damned folly," and got up and walked away. "What a silly man the Major is!" I said. "It is not the Major who is silly," the chorus replied. "We think—" I told them to let that pass and go on with the game. "Do you know how to play 'Rabbits'?" someone said to Mrs. WALKER. "No," said Mrs. WALKER, "and—"



A SKELETON ARMY; OR, THE CHARGE OF THE VERY LIGHT BRIGADE.

MR. HALDANE (*at the Cavalry Manœuvres*). "YOU SEE THOSE THREE MEN? WELL, THEY'RE PRETENDING TO BE ONE HUNDRED. ISN'T THAT IMAGINATIVE?"

MR. PUNCH. "REALISTIC, YOU MEAN. THAT'S ABOUT WHAT IT WILL COME TO WITH US IN REAL WARFARE."

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK





FASHION FAVOURS THE FRAIL.

Bored sportsman (to his brother-in-law and host). "I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW THIS 'WALKING-UP' BUSINESS HAS GONE CLEAN OUT? YOU CAN TAKE IT FROM ME, THE BEST PEOPLE SIMPLY DON'T DO IT."

"Reserve your defence," I said hurriedly, "and ask me." "Why?" asked Mrs. WALKER. "You'll see in a moment," I told her, and she asked me, as one humours a restless child: "Do you know how to play 'Rabbits'?" "No," I said slowly, relying more upon Mr. "Z.'s" dicta than upon my own observations for my *dénouement*, "so I am afraid we shall not be able to play."

Now Mr. "Z." had led me to suppose that this was a moment when manly guffaws and girlish laughter rent the air. I had gathered that at this point the suggester of the game was patted upon the back for a merry fellow with a pretty wit and carried shoulder high by the laughing throng. Picture to yourself, rather, a funereal crowd kneeling upon the damp grass in a ridiculous circle and regarding me more in anger than in sorrow amid the most silent silence conceivable. What appeared to be a joke to Mr. "Z." turned out, in fact, to be the saddest and most tragic effect ever conceived by the mind of man. Realising this I left them to their wrath, and crept away in shame to the bicycles. There, choosing a new one with three good speeds and a little oil bath, I rode away lonely and depressed into the outer darkness.

I am a broken man now and a social pariah, but I still have one hope left. It is that I shall in the latter days meet Mr. "Z." face to face. I shall come very close to him and look him straight in the eye, and then, without seeing his hand or feeling the bumps of his head, shall tell him his character with a candour and a thoroughness which will take his last breath away.

Answer to Correspondent.

"ANXIOUS ONE."—Our attention has already been called to Mr. HAROLD SPENDER's utterances on the mission of himself and Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE ("our mission to Germany," as he is reported to have described it to a *Daily Mail* correspondent); and we agree with you that it would not be advisable to disband our Navy until we have the mission's guarantee that such action would be approved in Germany as likely to strengthen the idea of friendly relations between the two countries.

In M.A.P. Mr. HALL CAINE describes Mr. WILKIE COLLINS' forehead as one that "belonged to Collins alone." So different from Mr. CAINE's own forehead, which we have come to regard as the property of the nation.

"The gardens are well supplied with seats, and there are umbrageous walks in various directions, where the old, but never new, tale is told."—*Liverpool Echo*.

That 's the worst of chestnuts: they 're never really fresh.

It is proposed to hold a conference, when the London borough councils resume their meetings, to discuss the question of the damage done to lamp-posts by motor vehicles in the streets of London. Personally, we hope it will be possible to arrive at some sort of compromise whereby the motor vehicles may knock down as many lamp-posts as they like if they will leave pedestrians alone.

BLANCHE'S LETTERS.

ABOUT FIRE AND WATER.

Broadlands,
August.

DEAREST DAPHNE,—The ST. ADRIANS' has always been counted a nice house to stay at, and *now* they've surpassed themselves! Their last house-party was indeed in luck to have the week wind up with such a glorious blaze. You've read about it, of course, in the dailies; but you don't know how simply lovely it was to be there. My dear, for real fun and thrills of the *first* magnitude, *nothing* comes up to a fire, so long as it's at someone else's place, and you're young and *real*, with lots of pretty, naturally wavy hair. For *then*, you know, it's such awful fun to be saved! Of course, if I were like *some* people, I'd rather be left to my fate. Not that there was any leaving people to their fates in *this* case. There was no life lost, and not the least danger of such a thing.

NORTY happened to be staying there, and he saved my life *most heroically*. Then I flew about saving others, and giving help wherever it was needed. If you look in *The Sideglancer* and *West-End Whispers* you will see a full account of it all, headed, "Heroic Conduct of a Popular Society Leader. Mrs. MULTIMILL Saves Many Lives!" and photos of me in a sweet Etruscan dressing-robe, sandals on my bare feet, and my hair streaming in the wind. In one I'm flying along crying, "Fire! Fire!" In another I'm carrying a jug of water to the hottest part of the blaze.

BERYL CLARGES is *wild* that she didn't happen to be staying there at the time. Indeed, she's so set upon being even with me and distinguishing herself in a fire, and being saved and all that, that it really wouldn't be *safe* to have her to stay anywhere just now.

Lord ST. ADRIAN and his six sons long ago formed themselves into a fire brigade, and have practised and drilled till they're *quite* perfect. It was wonderful to see how cool and skilful they were, and how they fell into line and all that sort of thing, and went through quite *professional* evolutions. But, unfortunately, there was no water to be had; and *however* cool and skilful and well drilled an amateur fire-brigade may be, and *however* many evolutions they may go through with the hose, they can't do *very* much without water. And so the whole west wing, with the

picture-gallery and library, was burnt before help came.

There were some juvenile-antiques in the party—POPSY, Lady RAMSGATE, for one. My dear, the less said about them the better, when brought hurriedly out of danger, quite *au naturel* as to hair and complexion! I am pretty sure that, when the Prophet said "Truest truth is fairest beauty," he had never stayed with a large party in a house where fire broke out in the early hours of a summer's morning, and people ran out into the grounds in spur-of-the-moment toilettes.

The men are telling a simply odious story about dear Professor DIMSDALE. He was one of those staying there (it was a *particularly* clever party), and, only the evening before the fire, a number of us who used to be at his mental philosophy lecture-chats last spring were sitting at his feet while he talked in the most lovely way, occasionally dashing back with his hand the curls that *will* fall over that wondrous philosophic brow. (People can't help having curly hair, *can* they? even if they are profound thinkers.) Among other memorable things, he told us never to use "that foolish expression 'I must believe my senses,' because our senses were given us *expressly* to conceal the truth from us!" Isn't that a delicious idea? He told us, too, that, like some old Greek or Latin, he could say that life and death were all one to him and he was *perfectly* indifferent about them. And yet NORTY says the Professor was one of the *first* out of the house after the alarm was given, that he ran faster than any of them, and didn't try to save anyone, and that—oh, it's an abominable libel!—above that brow that's always occupied with the Noumenon, and the Macrocosm, and the Microcosm, and the nothingness of everything—there was a row of curling-pins!

As BERYL hadn't the luck to distinguish herself at a fire, she's turned her attention to the *other* element, and, with my help, has brought off a *very* good thing. Clarges Park, you know, is only two or three miles from Paradeville-on-Sea, and, the Olympic Games being still rather in the air, BERYL wrote to the Mayor or the Town Council or something to say she was willing to give a Diving and Swimming Display off the East Pier for the benefit of the local life-boat fund. They thanked her very much, but said they'd quite a new life-boat which had been paid for—(Pigs!). So BERYL said that

she dared say they could do with a few more, and anyhow she meant to give the show, and they could use the pier admission money for anything they liked.

As soon as I got wind of it, I offered my services, for I've always taken an *immense* interest in life-boats. And then *heaps* of people wrote and wired and 'phoned to say they'd help—*some*, my dear, who not only can't *dive*, but can't *swim*! We had to tell them it was to be a *diving* not a *drowning* exhibition.

The pier was a *struggling mass* at half-a-crown each (you know, my dearest, how *ces autres* will always pay and elbow to see us do anything), and it all went with a yell. Oh, my little, darling, ducky diving-dress! But you'll see me in it in the picture-weeklies.

I don't say that BERYL and BABS didn't dive perhaps the weeniest bit better than I did, but I "*peeled*" best of the three, and was quite the favourite of the crowd.

Ever thine, BLANCHE.

P.S.—When JOSIAH heard about it, he disapproved in his very best style. He has put his foot down, my dear, and that's flat! He says if I want to go in for diving and swimming he'll have a place specially made for it here. *Here*, you know! The very idea! As if people wanted to dive and swim in the *depths* of the *country*, with not a creature near to see them.

NEUROTIC MOTOR-CARS.

EXTRAORDINARY ALLEGATIONS.

THE recent distressing accident to Mr. HALL CAINE, due to the running away of his motor-car, though happily unattended by any serious consequences to the talented fictionist, has caused a painful impression in motoring circles, as tending to create misgivings in the minds of *littérateurs* who may have purchased cars, or may be intending to purchase them. In these circumstances the information which a representative of *Mr. Punch* has gleaned from Dr. C. W. SYLLABUB, F.R.S. (Edin.), will be peculiarly welcome, as that eminent man of science is himself an expert motorist as well as musical and dramatic critic for sixteen daily and ten weekly papers.

"Yes," said Dr. SYLLABUB, who was toying with the metatarsal fin of an extinct ichneumon when we found him, "there is no doubt that motor-cars are extraordinarily sensitive and susceptible machines. You

remember KIPLING's story of an animated fugitive locomotive. Well, the novelist wrote better than he knew. There is no doubt whatever that what was merely an ingenious speculation in the case of the steam engine is an absolute fact in regard to the motor.

"Take this accident of Mr. HALL CAINE. He speaks of his nerves being utterly broken. I don't wonder at it. You note that he says his motor-car ran down the drive. Now I have not the slightest doubt that this was a case of deliberate evasion on the part of the machine. The motor-car ran away of itself. From whom, then, did it run? The answer is obvious—from Mr. HALL CAINE. All of us have experienced the desire, when brought into the presence of a great or awful personage, to seek safety or seclusion in flight, and this is clearly what happened in the present case. The car, probably a high-mettled neurotic 100-h.p. Mercédès, was so terrified by the proximity of dæmonic genius in goggles that it fled in an ecstasy of fright down the interminable avenue that winds up to the stately portals of Greeba Castle.

"But you must not think that this is an isolated case of what is professionally known as stampedomania amongst motors. Many similar cases have come within the range of my own experience. I had once a little Baby Peugeot, which was so nervous that I had actually to sing it asleep before it would consent to let me take the wheel. Mr. MAX PEMBERTON's great Cronstadt is an extraordinarily affectionate car. Indeed, he has told me that an unfavourable review of one of his novels will make it cry like a child. Mr. CLEMENT SHORTER's car quickens its pace when he calls it 'Charlotte.' Mr. J. M. BARRIE drives a PETER PANHARD, and converses with it in the Wendish tongue. The SID-LEES are all accomplished SHAKSPEAREAN scholars, and when Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE was writing *The Hound of the Baskervilles* one of his motor bicycles evinced its interest by frequently remarking 'Pup! pup!'

"Again, there is a famous lady novelist—I will not mention her by name, as she is notoriously averse from any form of publicity—who owns a very sensitive Itala car. She was recently reading aloud some of the most moving scenes in her forthcoming novel to a few friends when an agonising cry was heard from her garage. Her third footman burst



Golfer. "You've CADDIED FOR ME BEFORE. WILL YOU GIVE ME SOME HINTS BEFORE WE START?"

Sandy. "WEEL, IF YE'LL JUST NO DAE WHAT YE'RE CAEAN' TO DAE, YE'LL NO DAE SAE BAD!"

open the door, and a poignant voice issued from the exhaust pipe exclaiming that this was really too exhausting.

"Mrs. ELINOR GLYN, again, has a very fast car which exceeds the limit on the slightest provocation. And Lord AVEBURY told me the other day that the only way he could account for the behaviour of his car was that it must have a bee in its bonnet.

"Another point. It is impossible to expect to get satisfactory results out of a car unless you speak to it in the language of the country in which it was manufactured. For my own part I always make a point of conversing in the *lingua Toscana*

when I am driving a F.I.A.T. In a Spyker I speak French with a Belgian accent. In an Argyll I talk Gaelic. If drivers would only show a little more consideration to these highly organised creatures, there would be far fewer accidents. I cannot help thinking that the accident to Mr. HALL CAINE's car was due to his having inadvertently confused it by lapsing into his native Manx.

"By the way, I forgot to mention just now that Mr. TREE's new 'trolley,' as he humorously calls it, the Comyns Car, is more than usually faust."

This remark, we need hardly say, terminated the interview.

THE MAGIC CARAVAN.

["The caravan of the inventive genius is not very safe to live in. Everything collapses, and one is surrounded by unsuspected pitfalls."—*The Field.*]

SAID I to myself, let care be blown
 Whilst I go wandering free
 Afar from trains
 Through the long green lanes
 That lead to the voiceful sea.
 Sing hey! said I, for the open road
 And the open camp beside it!
 Sing ho! for the man
 With the caravan—
 But that was before I tried it.

I was filled with delight when I first caught sight of
 the gipsy-like home that awaited me,
 For the paint was as gay as the hedges in May, and the
 dimity curtains elated me;
 A queer little step upholstered in rep led up to a door in
 the centre,
 It was open a bit, and the view through the slit made
 me feel that I simply must enter.
 The fittings inside filled my bosom with pride, for the
 brass was as bright as it could be,
 And the woodwork was smart with the polisher's art,
 and everything just as it should be.
 These fittings, again, were a feast for the brain just as
 much as the eyes that were daft on 'em,
 For they all were designed by a masterly mind who had
 lavished the best of his craft on 'em.
 What wonderful tricks he had managed to fix! What
 ingenious dodges he'd hit upon
 For the saving of space in that rum little place! What
 curious things you'd to sit upon!
 You seated yourself on a sort of a shelf, but as soon as
 you let yourself down on it
 It suffered a change and became a small range with
 some sausages bursting and brown on it.
 You felt a wild wish for this savoury dish, but before
 you had time to lay hand on it
 The range disappeared in a manner most weird, and you
 were compelled to abandon it.
 At first it was fun just to see what was done—the furni-
 ture had such agility!
 But when everything grew into something quite new
 you longed for a little stability.
 At a quarter to five the bed came alive; it revolved, and
 in less than a minute
 'Twas no longer a bed but a sitz bath instead with you
 sitting shivering in it.
 You looked all about for a cloth or a clout or for any-
 thing likely to dry you,
 And your frowns disappeared when a towel-horse reared
 all covered with towels close by you.
 You stretched out to clasp what had seemed in your
 grasp, but the moment before you were able
 To clutch it you learned that the towels had turned to
 a cloth which was spread on the table.
 All dripping and wet you sprang out in a pet and looked
 for your garments to don 'em,
 But the hooks had turned round; they were not to be
 found any more than the clothes which were
 on 'em.
 Through all the day long things would keep going
 wrong, through breakfast and luncheon and dinner,
 Till my hair became grey and my flesh fell away, and
 my figure grew thinner and thinner.

At length in despair I resolved to repair to the nearest
 hotel I could light on;
 I've sent the van back, and the rest of the vac. my
 address is the Métropole, Brighton.

DISCURSIONS.

WHY JIMMIE SOPWITH MARRIED HER.

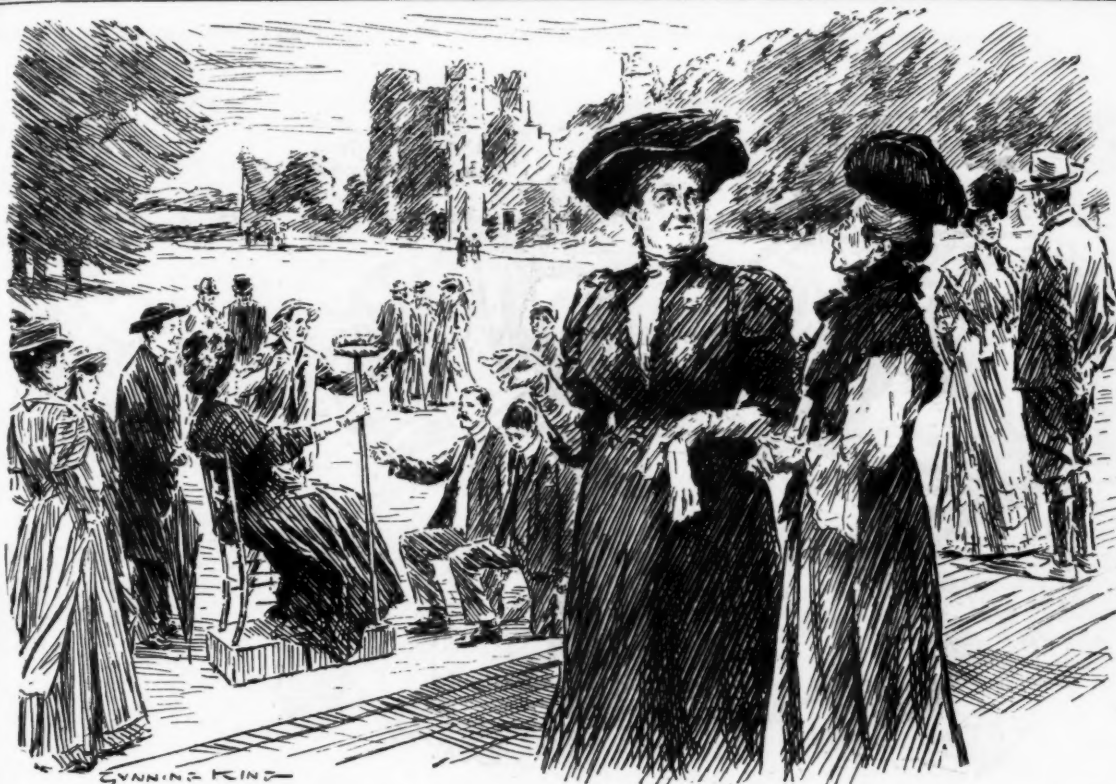
WHEN JIMMIE SOPWITH announced his engagement to
 Miss ADELAIDE HARBOTTLE there was a universal shout of
 amazement from all his friends. Certainly, JIMMIE was
 of the philandering sort; no man of forty, which was
 JIMMIE's age, had philandered with greater vigour. Still,
 he always played for safety, and generally secured it.
 Married ladies had a special attraction for him, but he
 never went too far or caused a single flutter of agitation
 in the breast of any *Othello* of his acquaintance. He
 had an assured income of about £3,000 a year, and his
 bachelor parties had acquired a great reputation. With
 unmarried girls he had a certain timidity of manner,
 but when he knew them well he became fatherly. No
 man, indeed, was considered to be more secure against
 the attractions of matrimony.

ADELAIDE HARBOTTLE varied in her age. I have known
 her to figure as a kitten of 28, and to pass primly in a
 single day to the age of 37. In the dim light of a discreet
 drawing-room she was young; in the blaze of a Foreign
 Office Reception the years came flocking to her as by
 magic. As a matter of fact, she was at least as old as
 JIMMIE. She was not exactly gaunt, but a strongly-
 marked nose of the Wellingtonian order gave her face a
 formidable and bony appearance. She was said to be
 "a good sort," and though she had, of course, never
 openly scratched for the matrimonial stakes, she was
 popularly supposed to have dropped out of the running.
 She and JIMMIE had been good friends for many years.

This was the lady, then, to whom JIMMIE, that con-
 firmed bachelor, not only became engaged, but whom
 he married in due course. Nobody has yet been able to
 ascertain why it happened, but there is no reason now
 why the mystery should not be revealed. JIMMIE, as all
 the world knows, disappeared mysteriously two years
 ago. His disconsolate relict was last heard of as con-
 ducting a search party for him in the remoter wilds of
 Patagonia, and, so far as I am aware, there are no
 surviving relatives of either side who will be affected in
 any way by the disclosure I am about to make. Before
 JIMMIE vanished into the inane he posted a letter to me,
 and it is from this document that I propose to quote.

"By the time you receive this," it began, "I shall
 have disappeared. It will be quite useless to search for
 me. All my measures are taken, and the secret of my
 whereabouts will never be known. I have made a
 proper provision for my wife, who will want for nothing.
 We have had four years of married life, and that is quite
 enough for either of us. You have been a very good
 friend to me, and I don't like to go without telling you
 why I got married. In fact, you were the only one of
 my friends who never showed the least curiosity on the
 point, and you are, therefore, the one man who ought
 to know. After two years have passed, you can use
 your discretion about telling anyone else.

"I don't want to bore you with a long story, so I'll
 tell you at once that the whole business was due to that
 detestable invention, the electric light. I always felt
 that there was something baleful about its uncompromising
 glitter, but I little knew what awful catastrophe
 it would bring upon me. Some men may say that my
 own sentimental weakness helped on the misfortune,



Vicar's Wife (trying to explain history to villager whose son is taking part in the rehearsal of *Pageant*). "YOU KNOW, MRS. PERKINS, WHEN THE ROMANS FIRST CAME TO ENGLAND, WE 'ANCIENT BRITONS' WERE NAKED SAVAGES PAINTED BLUE."
 Villager. "'DEED MA'AM, I DON'T REMEMBER IT, AND (with offended dignity) IT WAS ONLY SUCH OF US AS WERE ALIVE AT THE TIME!"

but I disagree with them. Gas or candles or oil would never have lured me on and lulled me and then crushed me with the same terrible completeness.

"It happened at Barrowdean, on the Sussex coast, in a bungalow which JACK TORREY, the parson, had taken for the summer. JACK, as you know, was married to ADELAIDE's youngest sister, LUCY, and ADELAIDE was staying with them. I was asked for a week-end, and, unconscious of my doom, I accepted. LUCY was a charming woman, plump and pink and cheerful, for whom I had always felt an extreme liking; her husband was a good chap, and ADELAIDE, of course, was an old shoe for comfort. Friday night and Saturday passed off well enough. Sunday was to be the fatal day.

"On Sunday evening we had cold supper to save the servants trouble, and two friends of JACK came in and shared it with us. We were, therefore, a party of six. Now, there was only one thing peculiar to this infernal bungalow. It was fitted with electric light, which worked on a shilling-in-the-slot arrangement. It ran all right for a certain time, and then, unless you popped a shilling into a kind of iron money-box and turned a handle, it went out. I don't know when the last shilling had been put in, but on this particular Sunday evening the machine had apparently arrived at its last halfpenny-worth.

"The dinner began all right. I had LUCY (who looked bewitching in light blue) on my left, and ADELAIDE, who was silent and *distracte*, on my right. JACK said grace in his best form, and we had just had

cold soup out of tea-cups when, without a word of warning, the blessed light went out. 'I'll put that right in a jiffy,' said JACK. 'Has anybody got a shilling?' Nobody had. There was a plethora of half-crowns, florins, and sixpences, but there wasn't a single shilling in the room. 'No matter,' said JACK, 'I know there's one on the mantelpiece in my bedroom,' and he stumbled out of the room to find it.

"Now darkness always had a curious effect upon me. I can't describe it better than by saying that it made me both affectionate and absent-minded. LUCY and I were old friends. Why shouldn't I give her a mark of my paternal devotion? I decided that there would be no harm in kissing her hand. I groped along the table for it, found it, grasped it (it made no resistance) and carried it to my lips. At this moment the shilling must have dropped into its receptacle, for the light went up with a dazzling flash, and I discovered to my horror and amazement that I had mistaken the side on which LUCY was sitting. I had let my hand stray to the right instead of to the left, and there I was with the back of ADELAIDE's hand planted on my mouth!

"'Congratulate us, LUCY,' said ADELAIDE with a fiendish readiness, 'we have been engaged for a month, and we're to be married before the end of the year.' At this moment JACK came back, and insisted, in spite of Sunday, on drinking our healths:—'JIMMIE, my boy,' he said, 'you've got a jewel, but I can't say you don't deserve her.' I sat like a dumb fool, and never said a word, and in three months ADELAIDE married me."



English Clergyman. "AND WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN LONDON, MY DEAR LADY, DON'T FAIL TO SEE ST. PAUL'S AND WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
Fair American. "YOU BET, I'LL RATTLE THOSE OFF SURE; BUT WHAT I'VE BEEN HANKERING TO SEE, EVER SINCE I WAS KNEE-HIGH TO A GRASSHOPPER, IS THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND!"

THE FELLOW-PASSENGER.

WHEN, about nightfall, the train stopped at the end of the branch, nearly all the travellers made for the lumbering omnibus that links up the railway with Brinehaven six miles further on. The rush had evidently been anticipated, for the omnibus had brought with it an ancient victoria capable of taking the overflow to the extent of two passengers. A young man of meek appearance and a large gladstone bag already occupied much of the interior of the latter vehicle. I hurried to take possession of the remainder.

"I hope," I said, after apologising for placing my luggage on the top of his, "that there will be room in the hotel." Nothing depresses me so much as the prospect of wandering stranded and homeless about a strange place, like a common player on a Sunday afternoon. It is not Sybaritism; it is merely the unfortunate result of a respectable bringing-up.

"I don't know," said the young man callously.

"I understand there is only one hotel," I went on. "It would be very awkward to be turned away—six miles from anywhere."

"Not at all nice," he observed without showing the slightest concern.

The young man was clearly either a disreputable Bohemian—perchance a hardened sleeper-out—or was brutally indifferent to the anxieties of his fellow-creatures.

"You have a bed to go to, perhaps?" I ventured with some acerbity.

"I am going to the hotel," he said.

"But you said you didn't know. Ah, you have written for a room! Wise man!"

"No, I can't say I did that," he answered, looking away at the last remnants of the sunset.

"Then they know you—you've been here before," I said.

"Oh no—never," he replied quietly.

Nothing annoys me so much as to find people sanguine and cheerful in a situation that fills me with qualms

and misgiving. And so I did not speak to the young man again during the whole of the six miles' drive. What struck me as rather remarkable was that he made no attempt to speak to me—not, indeed, until the next morning, when I had taken a seat in the coffee-room for breakfast. Then he said, "Tea or coffee, Sir?"

Homespun.

OUR leading journals and magazines are being compelled to adapt themselves to modern requirements in the way of "home" interest, and we are therefore looking forward to the new combination entitled *The Spectator and Girls' Home Journal*, with its "Chats with the Chicks, by UNCLE JOE"; and to a symposium about to appear in *The Nineteenth Century and Afternoon Tea* on the question: "Do Duchesses make the best Wives?"

"The new South Parade pier at Southsea, which has been built by the corporation at a cost of about £70,000, was F. G. Foster."—*The Times*.

A clever disguise, but we spotted him at once.



ABDUL THE SPONTANEOUS.

YOUNG TURKEY. "MY BOWL, I THINK? "

SULTAN. "QUITE RIGHT. I WAS ONLY MINDING IT FOR YOU."



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AMUSINGS.

[Some notes upon curious findings discerned by S. John Otsakura, of Nagasaki, student of Automobile Construction, Letters and Life.]

FEEDING WITH FISHERS.

READING his work, I cannot surmise Mr. ISAAC WALTON (who is now some time deceased, poor chap!) was a very miserable person at all, but I am sure he is not so jolly as a club of angling gentlemen with which I have recently taken some food. This fishers' society is entitled The Chelsea Park and Sands End Piscatorial Club.

Strangely, for chaps so connected with *aqua pura*, their place of tryst is a public-house called the Blue Boar. I perceived from summit of an omnibus next day from the strange device on its *façade* that the blue boar is a species of extinct pig of a dark Cambridge boat-race hue.

Having performed the deglutition of a split-soda-mineral, I followed my consort aloft, coming to roost in a large room in most festal array. On all bounds were tables dressed in fine napery of great snowishness, fitted out with quite the usual number of forks and other lunching-tools. At twenty-seven minutes after the appointed pistol-fire Hon. Chairman said grace before soup. The lading-bill I quote, to show you that fishers are not confined to asceticism by effete rules of casto

Soups.

CLEAR OX-TAILS. SMOCK-TURTLE.

Fish.

BOILED COD & SHRIMP'S SAUCE. PULLETED SOLE.

Joint.

ROAST BEEF HORSE. RADISH.

Vegetables.

BAKED AND BOILED POTATOES. CAULIFLOWERS.

FRENCH BEANS.

Sweets.

ANGLE'S PUDDINGS. CHERRY. TART CREAM.

CHEESE, CELERY, BISCUITS.

WINES AND SPIRITS OF THE BEST QUALITY.

CIGARS, CIGARETTES AND BILLIARDS.

CLUB ROOMS TO LET.

I succeeded in polishing up some of each, despite a meat lunch in an A.B.C. store, and was pleased to note the absence of pedantiery with which my confederates ate meat. Here I saw no slavish imitation as to *meum* and *tuum* between knife and fork. One fisher certainly asked a waiter to change his meat knife, protesting that its blade, not wide enough to act efficiently as a peatransporter, was yet so keen an edged-tool as twice to have made incision in his right cheek or jowl. The waiter readily obliged him, remarking



"THE MAN FROM COOK'S."

English Girl (with great distinctness, addressing the chef de gare). "PARDON, MONSIEUR! VOULEZ-VOUS CHERCHER POUR MOI L'HOMME AVEC LE MOT 'CUISINIER' AUTOUR DE LA COURONNE DE SON CHAPEAU?"

that the caterer really ought to provide wooden spoons.

But I forgot. Mister Chairman, a very waggish gentleman in a robin redbreast vest-coat with brass buttons, rose to his legs, and said: "Mister Vice and gentlemen! It is my pleasant task to propose a hearty vote of—I mean the health of our most gracious King, EDWARD THE SEVENTH."

Each fisher arose as one man, his glass in hand, nodded to his neighbours, and said "The King," as at a game of napcards. Then all drank their tipples off at one bound, while a concealed player upon the pianoforte played *God Save the King*. Each

man sang lustily, I of course joining. This interlude gave me a blow for the roasted beef, I am thankful to remark. After the sweetmeats, the Chairman's opponent, near my end of the table, arose upstanding, and said it was his pleasant allotment to propose the health and posterity of the Chelsea Park and Sands End Piscatorial Club, which he did with great heartfulness.

Then each gentleman reduced the restriction of his nether vest-coat buttons, and most lit large pale-swarthy cigars. I politely but tenaciously refused a cigar, and lit a virgin cigarette.

"I call upon Mr. R. TERRY for the

first song," said the Chairman. Whereupon up rose a slim young boy, with hair of great oleaginity, making his way nimbly to the most distant pole of the room, where was a Grand & Co. pianoforte, denuded of its bookcase timber.

Mr. TERRY treated us to a rendering of a ballad of some quaintness, early in which he took us into his confidence concerning the sweetness of a lady known as *Nora, the Bride of Kill Dare*.

Some of the singing was most agreeable, but I was pleasantly chilled by the Vice-Chairman announcing that he would now call upon the Chairman to present the prizes to the fishers who had created the most remarkable draughts of five thousand.

The Chairman smiled, and commenced to say the Club had had a most successful season. "Hear, hear," said many. I took the cue, saw my chance, and whenever he paused said "Hear, hear!" manfully enough. But unfortunately I was too pre-occupied on my vocalising to follow the trends of his oratory, and happened to give tongue to a most sounding interjection when, alack for vanity! he had just announced that, by force of the premature bankrupting of Mr. ROBERTSON, the prize for a large Jack-fish would not be forthcoming!

Presently I saw much laughter holding both its sides, and my right hand *vis-à-vis* handed me a small correspondence, requesting me kindly to pass it to Mr. Vice.

This I did, upon which Mr. Vice-Chairman stood up again and proposed the health of the Visitors. We all stood up and slaked our thirst once again, and then Mr. Chairman froze my hair by announcing that he really "must call upon Mr. —, the Japanese gent, to respond for the visitors."

I rose, bowed, and said:

"Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice, Mr. GEORGE" (my companion) "and gentlemen! I came to bury CÆSAR, not to respond to visitors, but this being the first occasion of my being asked to speak I am in for it. I am a stranger among you ("Hear! hear!"). But I am enough of a fisher to know anchovies from bloater's paste! (Much cackling.) But let us look round on fish apart from food, gentlemen. How useful an article is a fish. Think of the castor-oil, lamprey's piratic saline, fish-glue, and pauper's hide boot-strings we should never have had but for fishes and fishers! Let us regard the enormous waste of food if there were no funny monsters

to follow the wake of the exhumed hot-luncheons served on pleasure-steam-vessels at 2s. 6d., even 3s. 6d. per head, gentlemen! Let us be thankful to HANDEL'S creation of fishes, gentlemen, for manifold beatitudes.

"As a visitor in your middle to-night, gentlemen, let me say I am glad to be a visitor. I am sure we are all glad to be visitors, and all made rosy with sheepishness of gratification at the way in which you have toasted our shins. Gentlemen, in the name of others in my predicament, I think you very hearty chaps. Much obliged, and the same to each individual. Thank you! I am a fisher from to-night, though I fear I shall not take prizes except as a diminisher of boiled-cods! Once more, gentlemen, in the name of my colleagues, thanks very much, old chaps!"

Then came more singing, a solo upon three mandolins and the pianoforte, and many diverting incidents by flodden field. I fear GEORGE must have become jokingly practical later, for I found myself inhibiting the courage of a Belgian-hare at each glass—laying the treason to my soul that GEORGE had added a flow of reason to my mineral-drink. I showed many feats of agility with paper-folding (inadvertently immolating a postal order for one shilling and sixpence, sterling, in my eagerness to be up and doing tricks; but who cares?) and altogether quite cocked my walk.

On the whole it has been quite a change, but I was very surprised to find that the boniface of the Blue Boar was not at 12.30 after midnight such a cheery lad, yoho, as he proved himself while he overlooked the ordering of flasks of J. Barleycorn and drinks of bitterbeer and smallbass earlier in the evening. E. N. D.

An Army Order which has just been issued gives the following as the occasions on which the Union Jack is to be flown:—

"(a) On anniversaries only, or when specially required for saluting purposes. (b) On Sundays and anniversaries. (c) Daily."

A doctor writing on the "Uses of Oxygen" in *The Daily Mirror* says:

"I have often to run five minutes to a station and up a flight of stairs, across a bridge, and then across a siding. After breathing oxygen for six minutes I can do it easily."

Perhaps he could manage it still more comfortably if he spent the whole eleven minutes in walking quite slowly to the station.

THE SOUVENIR-HUNTERS.

"YES," said *la belle Américaine*, "there is no doubt that I have the finest collection of souvenirs on this side at the present moment. Would you like to see them?"

I said that nothing would give me greater pleasure; but of course many things would. Still, it is a useful phrase.

"You're just in time," she said. "They're all spread out on the tables: we pack up to-night. We sail on Saturday."

I followed her to her suite of sitting-rooms overlooking the Thames, and entered what appeared to be a marine store. "There!" she said triumphantly, indicating the *débris*.

Every inch of table, sofa, chair and mantelpiece space was covered with litter: pebbles, faded flowers, napkin rings, cigar stumps, cherry stones, bits of rock, spoons, forks, bed-knobs, railway straps, candle-ends, cakes of soap, billiard balls, menus, lumps of sugar, and a thousand other things. On looking more closely I saw that to each was affixed a card bearing a name and a date.

I picked one up and read it: "The Dover Pageant, July 28," it ran; "LOUIS N. PARKER's cigar stump."

"Ah!" she said, "that's one of my bulkiest souvenirs. Wasn't it lucky to get that? Won't it make some of the others just mad with jealousy?"

I picked up another: a spoon, with the name of a well-known Dec-side hotel on it.

"That's a Scotch one," she said.

"You have to be spry to get those, I can tell you; the waiters are all up to it now. Mamma was caught pocketing hers, but I got mine all right. Poor mamma, she's so unlucky. It cost her several dollars to square a horrid landlord at Stratford-on-Avon just because she was pocketing a napkin ring. I got mine, though—there it is!"

"I'm most particular," she continued, "to get them all myself; there's no fun in getting others to do it for you. Why, there's some girls mean enough to sit down at home, after they get back, and make souvenirs out of things they find there, and fix up labels for them just as if they were real. But all mine are genuine. And the trouble! Look at that plum stone there—that was left on Mr. THOMAS HARDY's plate the day we called at Max Gate, Dorchester. He'd had plum pie for lunch. It cost me a quarter to get that from the parlourmaid. I had to be sure



PREHISTORIC MAUD ALLANS.

IT WOULD BE THE GREATEST MISTAKE TO IMAGINE THAT THIS KIND OF THING WAS NOT ALL THE RAGE IN PRIMEVAL TIMES.

it was not Mrs. HARDY's, for example: that's what made the difficulty. Oh, I tell you, souvenir-hunting is no picnic.

"That red wine-glass," she went on, "is from Oxford—the Mitre, you know. That button I cut off an undergraduate's coat when he wasn't looking. That piece of soap is from a toilet place at Penshurst."

"But don't you think—? Isn't it rather like—?" I began.

"Oh, I know what you're going to say," she said. "Isn't it rather like stealing?" All you Britishers say that, and I'm fairly worn out answering. Of course it isn't. Americans don't steal, I'd have you know. It's just souvenir-hunting—a compliment to the old country, too."

"Very flattering, indeed," I said.

The Power of the Press.

"The Crisis in Persia is dealt with by a Special Correspondent."—*The Daily Telegraph.*

A HINT FOR A HEAT-WAVE.

WHAT though the car of Phœbus stands
Above us in a copper sky,

And pavements burn, and palsied hands
From shining temples hunt the fly,—

I do not care. I have a rule
For keeping all the time profoundly cool.

When other bards desert the town
To lave, beside some river's brim,
A Muse deplorably run down,
Or, fading into forests dim,
Discover that remote shebeen
Where wood-nymphs manufacture
Hippocrene;

I watch the butter float about,
The weary milk in torture turn;
But still my appetite is stout,
I sleep and eat with unconcern,

And in the morn I rise and sing
As gaily as a laverock on the wing.

Yet think not that a saline draught
Or airy suit of underclothes
Has steeled me to Apollo's shaft,
While other men perspire with oaths;

Ah, no, it is a simpler ruse
That saves my epiderm when London stews.

When pressmen make a vast parade,
And climate-mongers mourn the fact

Of glasses 90° in the shade,
Whose bulbs are very nearly cracked,
The artless poet's plain device
Is keeping his thermometer in ice!

The Horse before the Cart.

"Unlike most Parliamentarians, I (Clémenceau) has not run after his followers."

National Review.

A POPULAR AUTHORITY.

HE slipped smiling into the vacant seat beside mine on the top of the omnibus—a rusty, unprepossessing little man, somewhat frayed at the edges, and with a general air upon him that suggested a combination of Drink and the British Museum.

"I see," he began without apology, "that you are perusing one of my latest. I shall be glad to hear how it strikes you."

I glanced from him to my half-penny newspaper in surprise. "As a matter of fact," I replied, in a tone of corrective hauteur, "I am at present reading an article by 'an Eminent Harley Street Specialist' (whose name is not given) upon the Hygienic Aspects of Sea Bathing."

"Precisely," returned the seedy one affably. "Mine."

"Yours?" My look must have betrayed my incredulity, for he smiled again, apparently not ill pleased.

"I can repeat it by heart," he said, "if you wish for proof. It consists mainly of a few simple precautions to be observed by holiday-makers at the present season. You will correct me if I misquote. 'In dipping the head, care should be taken not to remain beneath the surface for more than half an hour. It is inadvisable for non-swimmers to dive into deep water immediately after a heavy meal. Never bathe in elastic-sided boots on a hot day. If the body turns bright blue all over and begins to swell, get yourself pulled out at once.' Do you want any more?"

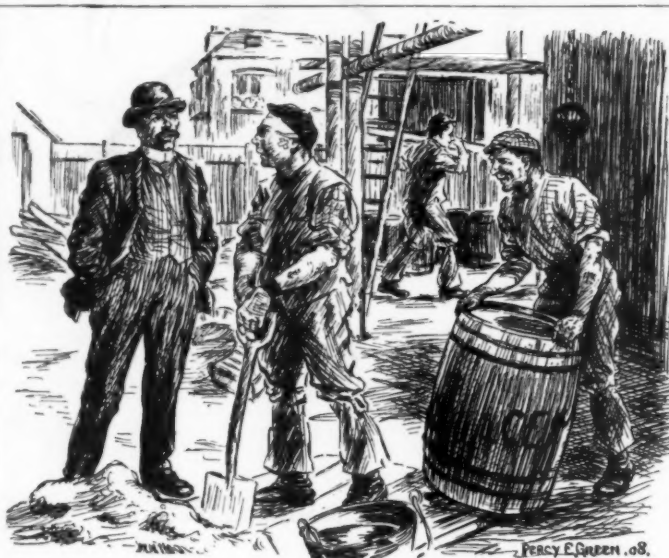
"On the contrary," I answered hastily, shaken but still unconvinced. Those impressive statistics on the dietetic properties of seawater, was it possible that they also could have been written by the individual beside me? I glanced at him again dubiously.

"All of it," he said, as though in answer to my thoughts. "Without me you would never have realised the exact proportion of hyposulphates in a mouthful of Margate, or the

comparative values in solution of Southsea and Scarborough'. It is I who tell you these things—not once, but many times."

I was impressed in spite of myself. "I fancied," I rejoined, "that I had read something very like them before."

The stranger smiled proudly. "Almost correct," he answered. "Your memory, my dear Sir, is above the average. You have read, not something very like them, but those identical words, every August for more years than I care to count. And yet," he added dreamily, "properly considered, that bathing article is but in its first youth."



Irate Overseer. "HERE, I SAY! WHAT THE BLAZES ARE YOU DOING HERE? I GAVE YOU THE SACK YESTERDAY!"

Battered Person. "YES, I KNOW YOU DID. AND DON'T YOU DO IT NEVER NO MORE. MY MISSES WENT ON SOMETHING AWFUL WHEN SHE HEARD!"

"There is one other thing," I ventured, not without hesitation, for I was beginning to revise my first estimate of him; "the style. I seem to catch an echo—other articles which are somehow familiar, but which I cannot definitely place."

This time he beamed in absolute triumph. "I congratulate you," he exclaimed warmly; "you have the perception of the connoisseur. Of course, many of my works are doubtless familiar to you. My monograph on the restorative properties of strawberries-and-cream will be fresh in your memory. It appeared in June, and had a popularity that I may describe without vanity as enormous. Indeed, with perhaps the possible exceptions of 'The Prophylactic Pancake' and

'Plum Pudding as a Force-Producer,' published on Shrove Tuesday and December 25th respectively, I should consider it the most widely read of all my purely alimentary writings."

"You have, then, other spheres of literary activity?"

"Without doubt. There is indeed hardly a hygienic aspect of popular amusement or interest that has not, from time to time, furnished its theme, either of warning or encomium, for my active pen. To take an example, 'Diabolo as a Preventative of Disease'—that was one of my greatest successes in 1907. Later on, however, I invented the

Diabolo Squint, and thus practically annihilated the craze. I have a great deal of power. There were others also last year that you may not have forgotten. 'What Limericks do for the Brain,' 'Should the Bald Balloon?' and a dozen more. All mine!"

I uncovered with reverence. "I had no idea," I said, "that I was in the presence of an authority so versatile and so renowned."

"Not at all," said the stranger, and held out his hand, which I grasped cautiously. Our mutual esteem was complete. But for all that there was one trifling inconsistency that even

then perplexed me. Appearances are notoriously misleading, but still—"an Eminent Harley Street Specialist" with flip-flap cuffs! I leaned forward, extending the newspaper and mutely calling his attention to the description with a look of enquiry.

He did not seem at all embarrassed. "Aha!" he said smiling, and might have been about to add more; but perceiving that we were now in Bloomsbury he substituted a hasty "Good morning" and descended briskly from the omnibus. I had a last glimpse of him standing before a small newspaper shop regarding proudly a contents-bill that displayed in letters of crimson and black the words "Are Holidays Harmful? Famous Medico Speaks."



THE CONFLICT OF THE SEXES.

SCENE—A picturesque fishing village on the East Coast.

"LOR' BLESS YOU, SIR, YOU WON'T GET NO PLACE 'ERE IN AUGUST! LEASTWAYS NOT A EVENIN' EFFEEK. IF YOU WAS TO COME DOWN TOWARD THE LATTER 'ALF O' NEXT WEEK, YOU MIGHT 'AVE A CHANCE OF A MORNIN'."

THE CONTROVERSIAL DRAMA.

THE action of Messrs. HALL CAINE and LOUIS NAPOLÉON PARKER in basing their new play upon an aspect of the Ideals of Marriage now being so ably discussed in *The Daily Telegraph*, has drawn a warm eulogy from that journal. In a recent leading article *The Telegraph* observes, not without complaisance, that nowadays the drama "fortifies its customary appeal by distinct and immediate reference to the burning topics that occupy our newspapers." Envious of earning a similar encouragement, several other managers are, we understand, taking steps to bring their respective entertainments into line with the correspondence columns of the daily press.

Thus it is (incredibly) rumoured that, in view of the interest aroused by the Silly Season discussion of "The Curate's Lot," Mr. BEERBOHM TREE contemplates an immediate revival of *The Private Secretary*. Obviously the spectacle of the Rev. Robert Spalding in the oak-chest cannot fail to have a powerful effect on the apologists for the present position of our Assistant Clergy.

In this connection also a protest reaches us from Daly's to the effect that the Lyceum is by no means the only theatre whose production may be said to bear upon the vexed question of matrimony and its consolations. Undoubtedly *The Merry Widow* presents an aspect of the same problem that should not be overlooked.

Finally, with regard to another topic which at present occupies popular attention—The Treatment of the Feeble-Minded—we need only mention that at least four West-End houses are nightly presenting some form of Musical Comedy.

Black Sheep in the Fold.

"During the last twelve months more than one hundred bicycles have been reported to the Surrey constabulary as having been stolen from porches of country churches. Captain Sant, the chief constable of the county, has issued a warning to vicars and churchwardens."

Manchester Evening News.

Classified under "Employment Wanted."

"BLACK PUGS; good specimens; 25/-, 35/- each."

It would be a help if the owner would state what kind of employment the dogs prefer.

From *Fellowship*, the journal of the Browning Settlement:

"Here is a sheaf of dates which coincided without any design by persons participating:—

"On the day after Browning's birthday, December 13th, the Settlement began to be (1894)

"Two days after Browning's birthday, May 9th, 1899, the National Committee of Organised Labour was formed."

It did look rather suspicious at first sight, but we gladly absolve the poet from the charge of complicity.

The schedule issued from the Board of Trade in its search for information regarding the Bleaching and Dyeing Industries contains a question as to the number of working days in the year. There is a note for the reply:

"If the answer to this question is 'None,' the proper entry is 'None.' Blanks are misleading."

We hope the gentleman who drew up the form was not influenced by his experience at his own office.

OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks.)

"I LOVE my love with an H because he is handsome, and his name is Hardy, and he lives on a hill," was no doubt what Miss Leslie used to say to herself, though I don't think M. E. FRANCIS, the author of *Hardy-on-the-Hill* (METHUEN), has mentioned it; but, anyhow, the heroine's aspirations could not be realized at once, because Mr. Hardy stood on a much lower level socially than territorially, being, in fact, a yeoman farmer of Dorset, while she was the daughter of an Oxford don. Besides there was a polished villain who attempted to entangle her; and Hardy very foolishly engaged himself to a girl of his own class. After being saved, however, from flood and fire through the hero's athletic resourcefulness Miss Leslie very properly decided (calculating, perhaps, on the chances of an earthquake) to overlook class distinctions; and, other complications being removed, is now, I believe, Mrs. Hardy. The tale is pleasantly and skilfully told and indulges the reader with one of those glimpses of farm-life which he resolutely determines to believe in. But is not the title that Mrs. BLUNDELL has chosen rather daring for a Wessex romance? What if the publishers were to startle us some fine morning with "*Phillpotts-on-the-Dart*, a Devonshire idyll"; or "*Corelli-super-mare*, a simple tale of the sea"?

Mr. JOHN LONG has recently published a book called *The Hard Way*, which, according to the title-page, is written by A PEER. Think of that! A real live peer. If the otherwise anonymous author had been a mere commoner, I cannot help suspecting that Mr. LONG would have sent him and his MS. back to school to learn many things, amongst others that the German for "why" is *warum* and not *warim*, and that "dear" is *liebe* and not *leibe*. After all, *noblesse oblige* even in such trifling matters as spelling and grammar and style; and personally I should think a good many times before I wrote "*je les ai comptés*," or said that "the irrepressible crumples of her nature rose to a quick thought," or called a plebeian pocket handkerchief "a hemmed inornate square." But then I am not a peer. The moral of *The Hard Way* is that young ladies who propose to commit bigamy ought to be quite sure that no one knows about marriage number one before they venture to go through the ceremony of number two. Poor *Delilah Chertsey* omitted that precaution and paid the penalty in the shape of blackmail and much distress of mind. As her first husband was locked up in a lunatic asylum for all but three days of their married life, and her second died almost as soon as they had

legally become man and wife, she did not altogether have a very lively time. But she has at least the consolation of feeling that her biography has been written by a peer.

If there is any author whom I would have backed to clear up with a triumphant surprise the most bewildering tangle, that author is Mr. RICHARD MARSH, and he has disappointed me. *The Surprising Husband* (METHUEN)—the title beckons you—deals with certain social difficulties connected with the coloured race question, and what with obeahs and voodooes, prejudices and conventions, Mr. MARSH knots together as pretty a piece of puzzlement as even he could conceive. He works it up cleverly.

The various players in the game are distinct and convincing, if one or two of them are a thought bizarre, and you read on wondering how on earth matters will get straight—for of course they will. There is one way out which you will think of at once, but, knowing Mr. MARSH, you will reject it, for anybody could put his harassed hero alone into an open boat at sea and make it turn turtle. Mr. MARSH, you say, will surely never do anything so obvious as that. Yet— But perhaps that is the surprise.

Extracts from *The Edge o' Beyond*, by GERTRUDE PAGE (HURST AND BLACKETT), might be read with advantage at the next meeting of the Chartered Company, for in this story of Rhodesian life the author has shown impartially both the sunshine and the shadows of that land of charin and mystery. At first I thought that Joyce Grant was going to be the heroine, but I was wrong. Rhodesia soon asserted a better claim to that distinction. The fortunes of Mrs. Grant left me apathetic, but Rhodesia is a Circe with magic to paralyse

the critical faculties of her suitors. Yet she has her practical side. "If you don't happen to have private means, or, at any rate, not less than £800 capital, you'll probably go under." This, to the idealist, may be a little disappointing; but, after all, many heroines with less to give have asked for more.

Recipe for "Chocolate Pudding" in *The Manchester Evening Chronicle*:

"One quart milk, 3 tablespoons sugar, little salt. Thicken with 2 tablespoons corn starch. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup shredded cocoanut." If that doesn't do it, take out everything except the salt, add a leg of mutton and a turnip, and call it Roast Beef.

Socialistic Candour.

"The ethics of Poor Law Relief are founded on robbery of the poor. Its administration is rotten to the core. The decent poor refuse to accept it. Decent citizens are reluctant to dispense it . . . Meantime, the vacancies created on the Board are to be contested by the local Socialists."—*The Clarion*.



Post (to Blackbird). "FOR GOODNESS' SAKE BE QUIET! I'M TRYING TO WRITE ABOUT A SKYLARK!"